

(b).—PROTECTION OF FORESTS FROM INJURY.

(1).—General Protection and Breaches of Forest Laws.

(a).—General Protection.

45. The establishment sanctioned for the Supá and Gund Working-Circles in the Northern Division of Kánara, was not entertained (with the exception of guards) during the year, owing to the orders of Government on the question as to whether the old or the new programme-students were to be given preference in the appointments to the Rangers' grade, not having been received until after the close of the year.

46. The orders contained in Government Resolutions Nos. 4028 and 2645, dated respectively 29th May 1895 and 26th March 1896, were given effect to in selected portions of the Sirsi and Yellápur ranges. In Sirsi, 8 depôts were established, but as no demand for *soppu* arose, they were closed in October 1896. It is reported that owing to the hostile attitude of the garden-holders towards the introduction of the depôt system, one of the depôt-huts was burnt by incendiaries, but the offenders could not be traced. Four *soppu* depôts were also established in Yellápur and the special establishment sanctioned for the operations was entertained for 9 months, but the garden-holders remained hostile to the system and did not purchase any *soppu* from forests outside their *betta* limits. The system, however, seems to have had one effect, and that is the protection of certain portions of forests from illegal loppings. Rs. 3,326 were spent on the special *soppu*-depôt establishment, without any return in revenue.

(b).—Breaches of Forest Rules.

47. The cases taken into Court and disposed of by Magistrates during the year as compared with 1895-96, are detailed in the following statement:—

Division.	CASES OF THE YEAR 1895-96.							CASES OF THE YEAR 1896-97.							PERCENTAGE OF FAILURE. ●	
	Pending in Court on 1st July 1895.	Taken into Court during the year.	Total.	Disposed of by Magistrates during the year.			Pending in Court on 30th June 1896.	Pending in Court on 1st July 1896.	Taken into Court during the year.	Total.	Disposed of by Magistrates during the year.			Pending in Court on 30th June 1897.	1895-96.	1896-97.
				Convictions.	Acquittals.	Total.					Convictions.	Acquittals.	Total.			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Northern Division, Kánara	15	12	27	20	4	24	3	3	10	13	5	4	9	4	16.6	44.4
Southern Division, Kánara	1	52	53	30	13	43	10	10	51	61	43	12	55	6	30.2	21.8
Western Division, Kánara.	4	60	64	33	29	62	2	2	47	49	34	15	49	...	46.7	30.3
Belgaum	3	11	14	7	3	10	4	4	24	28	18	5	23	5	30	21.7
Dhātwar	...	20	20	13	3	16	4	4	8	12	7	4	11	1	18.7	36.3
Bijápur	...	23	23	18	5	23	...	...	23	23	18	2	20	3	21.7	10
Kolába	15	375	390	272	46	318	72	72	219	291	110	57	16	124	14.4	34.1
Ratnágiri	1	7	8	7	1	8	...	...	8	8	7	1	8	...	12.5	12.5
Total ..	39	560	599	400	104	504	95	95	390	485	242	100	342	143	20.6	29.2

48. The figures, in the above statement, for 1895-96 for the three divisions of Kánara have been arranged according to the redistribution of ranges sanctioned in Government Resolution No. 10330 of 17th December 1896.

49. It will be seen from the above that there was a decrease in the number of prosecutions in the whole Circle of 170 as compared with 1895-96, and

that it is chiefly due to 156 less cases having been taken into Court in Kóbába than in the previous year.

50. *Northern Division of Kánara*.—Of the 10 cases instituted during the year, 6 were for misappropriation of timber and other produce, 1 for setting fire to forests, 2 for digging trenches in reserved forests and 1 for illegal cultivation in reserved forests. The 3 cases pending in Court at commencement of the year, were for setting fire to forests. Of these 13 cases, 9 were disposed of by Magistrates and 4 (consisting of 1 for incendiarism and 3 for misappropriation of timber) were pending trial at close of the year. The percentage of failures was very high, 44·4 against 16·6, but the number of cases is so small that the percentage of failures, as compared with other years, is not a fair criterion of the degree of care exercised in bringing cases before the courts.

51. *Southern Division of Kánara*.—The percentage of failures was 21·8 against 30·2, although the number of prosecutions was about the same as in the previous year, viz., 51 against 52. From this result it is evident that more care was exercised in taking cases before Magistrates. Of the 51 cases referred to above, 33 (9 in Sirsi, 23 in Siddápur and 1 in Yellápur) were for the illicit cutting of *soppu* or green leaves for manure, of which only 5 were let off by Magistrates for want of sufficient evidence. The other cases call for no remarks.

52. *Western Division of Kánara*.—The number of cases taken into court fell from 60 to 47. In the Kárwár Range, there were 18 cases of illegal cutting of firewood within the 5-mile-limit of the town, in 10 of which conviction was obtained. Of the 15 cases in which conviction failed in the division, 8 were for the illicit cutting of firewood within 5 miles of Kárwár, 2 for theft of wood, 2 for removal of timber without passes, 1 for cutting *soppu*, 1 for extracting bark of green mati-trees and 1 for opening a drain in reserved forest without permission. The *soppu* and firewood cases were let off as being trivial and the others for want of sufficient evidence.

53. The percentage of failures was 30·6 against 46·7 in 1895-96.

54. In *Belgaum*, 24 cases were taken into court during the year against 11 in 1895-96 with the result that convictions were obtained in 18 cases as against 7, the delinquents in most of the cases being old offenders. The increase in the number of cases is reported to have been due to the scarcity that prevailed in the district. There were no important cases to call for any remarks.

55. In *Dhárwár*, there were 8 cases against 20 in 1895-96, and the decrease is attributed by the Divisional Forest Officer to offenders, except in important cases, having been let off with a warning, owing to the great distress prevailing during the year. The percentage of failures (36·3 against 18·7) as compared with the previous year has doubled, but the total number of cases is very small to take percentages on.

56. In *Bijápur*, the number of prosecutions remained the same as in 1895-96. The Divisional Forest Officer reports that there was an "abnormal increase in forest offences in general, on account of famine," but that "prosecutions were only resorted to in cases when the offenders had committed similar offences before or when the gravity and frequency of the offences called for deterrent punishment." In only 2 cases, were the offenders acquitted, a fact which goes far to shew that the Divisional Forest Officer exercised good judgment in selecting cases for trial.

57. In *Kolába*, the number of prosecutions fell from 375 to 219, but both the percentage of failures (34·1 against 14·4) and the total number of cases pending at close of the year (124 against 72) do not compare favourably with the results of the preceding year.

58. In *Ratnágiri*, the prosecutions were chiefly in connection with the thefts of trees in the reserved forests in Málvan. Of the 8 cases taken into Court, the prosecutions failed in only 1, as the Magistrate held that the offence, viz., theft of wood in the reserved forest, was of a trivial nature. The number of prosecutions as well as the percentage of failures remained the same as in the previous year.

59. The following table shows the number of cases compounded by the Divisional Forest Officers during the last two years :—

Division.	1895-96.				1896-97.			
	Total number of cases disposed of.	Number of cases commuted.	Number of cases discharged.	Amount of compensation recovered.	Total number of cases disposed of.	Number of cases commuted.	Number of cases discharged.	Amount of compensation recovered.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
				Rs.				Rs.
Northern Division, Kánara ...	69	69	...	425	10	10	...	26
Southern do. ...	46	46	...	446	57	57	...	234
Western do. ...	36	36	...	74	50	50	...	226
Belgaum ...	110	110	...	79	167	167	...	216
Dhárwár ...	13	13	...	22	14	14	...	17
Bijápur ...	4	4	...	5	33	33	...	55
Kolába ...	76	76	...	345	116	116	...	275
Ratnágiri ...	6	6	...	10	16	16	...	13
Total ...	360	360	...	1,406	463	463	...	1,062

60. It will be seen that there was an increase of 103 in the total number of cases commuted during the year under report, and that the major portion of this increase was contributed by Kolába, Bijápur, Belgaum and Ratnágiri; while in the Northern Division of Kánara, the number fell from 69 to 10. In Kolába, although there were 40 cases more than in 1895-96, the amount of fines recovered was about Rs. 70 less, and the Divisional Forest Officer ascribes this result to the fact that there were not many offences of the sort that demanded heavy punishment, most of the cases commuted being for stealing green firewood and for breaches of forest rules. The increase in cases commuted in Bijápur, would have been still greater but for the leniency shown by the Divisional Officer owing to the great distress caused by the prevailing famine which induced people, otherwise law-abiding, to commit petty thefts of firewood, and 30 of such cases were let off with mere warning and this leniency was not misplaced under the peculiar circumstances of the year.

61. A large number of cases were let off with simple warning. There were 161 such cases in Belgaum, 110 in Kolába, and altogether 335 have been reported.

62. Appendix 52 shows the number of cases compounded and taken into court during the year under report. The following table gives the figures for the past two years :—

Division.	Taken into Court.		Compounded under Section 67.		Total number of cases.	
	1895-96.	1896-97.	1895-96.	1896-97.	1895-96.	1896-97.
Northern Division, Kánara ...	12	10	69	10	81	20
Southern do. ...	52	51	46	57	98	108
Western do. ...	60	47	36	50	96	97
Belgaum ...	11	24	110	167	121	191
Dhárwár ...	20	8	13	14	33	22
Bijápur ...	23	23	4	33	27	56
Kolába ...	375	219	76	116	451	335
Ratnágiri ...	7	8	6	16	13	24
Total ...	560	390	360	463	920	853

63. The total number of cases detected in the Circle decreased by 67, while the number compounded increased by 103, facts which appear to indicate that on the whole greater leniency was displayed towards offenders.

64. Arranged in Form I prescribed by Government Resolution No. 5148 of 9th July 1897, the cases fall under the different categories as follows :—

Division.	CASES TAKEN INTO COURT.				CASES COMPOUNDED.				CASES UNDETECTED.				TOTAL CASES.				Grand Total of Cases.
	Injury to Forests by fire.	Unauthorized felling or appropriation of wood and minor forest produce.	Grazing without permission, or in tracts in which grazing is prohibited.	Other offences.	Injury to Forests by fire.	Unauthorized felling or appropriation of wood and minor forest produce.	Grazing without permission, or in tracts in which grazing is prohibited.	Other offences.	Injury to Forests by fire.	Unauthorized felling or appropriation of wood and minor forest produce.	Grazing without permission, or in tracts in which grazing is prohibited.	Other offences.	Injury to Forests by fire.	Unauthorized felling or appropriation of wood and minor forest produce.	Grazing without permission, or in tracts in which grazing is prohibited.	Other offences.	
Northern Division, Kánara..	1	6	...	3	...	10	...	...	60	4	...	...	61	20	...	3	84
Southern do.	...	48	...	3	...	57	...	...	81	7	...	...	81	112	...	3	196
Western do.	...	40	...	7	...	48	...	2	72	16	...	3	72	104	...	13	189
Belgaum ...	...	21	3	...	...	155	...	12	128	67	...	...	128	243	3	12	386
Dhárwár ...	...	7	1	...	...	14	...	...	66	19	...	...	66	40	1	...	127
Bijápur ...	...	17	2	4	...	31	2	...	...	1	...	...	...	49	4	4	67
Kolába ...	7	159	9	44	9	94	5	8	114	302	...	...	130	555	14	52	751
Ratnágiri ...	...	6	...	2	...	15	...	1	3	28	...	3	3	49	...	6	68
Total ...	8	304	15	63	9	424	7	23	544	444	...	6	561	1,172	22	92	1,847

(2).—Protection from Fire.

65. The following table shows the results of fire-protection-measures reported for each division :—

Division.	AREA IN SQUARE MILES.			Percentage of failures to area attempted.	Cost.		Proportion of area under fire-protection to total area of reserves.
	Attempted.	Failures.	Protected.		Per square mile protected.	Per acre protected.	
					Rs.	Pies.	
Northern Division of Kánara ...	* 364.60	78.17	286.43	21.43	17.56	5.27	*144.7
Southern do. ...	174.06	22.51	151.55	12.93	28.26	8.47	34.2
Western do. ...	265.29	0.43	264.86	.16	11.54	3.46	52.6
Belgaum ...	185.12	7.40	177.72	3.99	15.64	4.69	27.82
Dhárwár ...	55.57	3.72	51.85	6.69	19.13	5.74	15.23
Bijápur ...	114.67	...	114.67	...	1.50	.45	73.94
Kolába ...	130.49	2.05	128.44	1.57	5.38	1.61	29.72
Ratnágiri ...	18.82	0.02	18.80	.10	.90	.27	.85
Total in 1896-97 ...	1,308.62	114.30	1,194.32	8.73	14.25	4.28	44.96
Total in 1895-96 ...	1,441.67	29.49	1,412.18	2.04	17.31	5.19	51.12
Increase or decrease in 1896-97 ...	—133.05	+84.81	—217.86	+6.69	—3.06	—0.91	—6.16

* Includes part of the area of Sapa gazetted under Section 19 of the Forest Act during the year.

66. A smaller area was fire-traced in all divisions (excepting Bijápur, Kolába and Ratnágiri) owing to the limited funds sanctioned for the work. The cost per square mile decreased from Rs. 17.31 to Rs. 14.25. The failures reported were, however, a good deal larger.